DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 412 337 CE 074 732

AUTHOR Hagemo, Sharon J.
TITLE Approaches to Meeting Skill Shortages.
PUB DATE 1997-09-07
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Fall Conference of the National Association of State Directors of Vocational Technical Education Consortium (Washington, DC, September 5, 1997).
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Needs; Elementary Secondary Education; *Employment Patterns; *Employment Potential; *Employment Practices; *Futures (of Society); *Job Skills; Labor Needs; Organizational Development; Postsecondary Education

ABSTRACT

Change is the most prominent characteristic of society and business today. Change is driven by people, technology, and information. In order to remain competitive in the job market, people must constantly update their knowledge. The education system must be evaluated and changed to meet the needs of the economy. Parents and educators need to become partners with businesses in the training of the future work force, and vocational education must become an integral component of the process. According to surveys in Michigan and New York, employers today rate the following as the most important job skills: no substance abuse, honesty and integrity, the ability to follow directions, the ability to read instructions, respect for others, following safety rules, and punctuality and attendance. The least important job skills include mathematics, social sciences, natural sciences, computer programming, foreign languages, art, calculus, and computers. The following shortcomings among today's employment seekers were identified: unrealistic career aspirations; employees who feel their employer "owes them something"; lack of career-related work experience; lack of reading and comprehension skills; lack of written communication skills; absence of tenacity, motivation, and commitment. Five new work roles for the information age are the following: (1) it must be made easier for all to change; (2) everything must be speeded up; (3) thinking must shift toward "new and improved"; (4) thinking should be centered on building our knowledge base; and (5) organizations must stay "in shape" for the next century. (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 412 337

Approaches to Meeting Skill Shortages

Presented To

National Association of State Directors of Vocational Technical Education Consortium (NASDVTE Fall Conference)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

September 5, 1997

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S. Hagemo
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Presented by

Sharon J. Hagemo
Director of Human Resources
Montana Rail Link, Inc.

CE 074 732

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Three Key "Drivers" of Change

We are truly moving into a New Age. It's reshaping business, national boundaries, government, politics, schools and, of course, our careers.

People

The most obvious reason we'll see an even faster rate of change in the years ahead is that you and I, like everyone else, keep pushing the world to change.

As consumers we get more demanding all the time. We want better quality; we want it faster and cheaper. Plus, we want more choices.

Technology

Since technology is a product of the human race, we can expect the rate of technological change to follow the trends in population growth.

It doesn't take long for skills and knowledge to become outdated in a fast changing world. College graduates can find even their most advanced technical skills outdated in a matter of years. Craftsmen must constantly adapt to new techniques and products. Some careers don't even get a chance to change; they just disappear.

It is said that well over 80% of the world's technological advances have occurred since 1900. With still more people to come and because technology feeds on itself, a rapid rate of technological change is basically guaranteed.

Information

The third powerful force driving change is information.

Knowledge

Lifelong learning is the only way to remain competitive in the job market.

Knowledge is becoming the new source of power, of wealth. And you have a chance to increase your share of it.

(Overhead) "*It has been estimated that 80% of jobs available in the United States within 20 years will be cerebral, and only 20 % manual, the exact opposite of the ratio in 1900 . . .*
There are already more computer-literate first graders than there are computer-literate first grade teachers. Can you beat a six-year old at Nintendo?" - *Jennifer Jones, Thinking in the Future Sense*

(Overhead) *"If you're going to break the grip of the old culture, seize, control of the schools. That's one of the basic rules followed by revolutionaries."*

Keep in mind that in virtually any social system, business included, schools are the voice of the establishment. If you are going to break the grip of the old culture, seize control of the schools. That's one of the basic rules followed by revolutionaries. Redirect training to put it in service of the culture shift. Everything about the training and education from content to how it's conducted should reflect a sweeping change in priorities, values, and beliefs.

(Overhead) "Only a productive workforce committed to excellence will allow business to succeed . . . "

- We have to evaluate what currently exists in education and training that meet the needs and potential of industry and "life style" opportunities.
- The American education system has tremendous potential in our human resources. Tapping into this potential, the American education system can train and generate those abilities which are extremely important to our economy. Montana's overall economic health is dependent on such things as workforce training and that training should be treated as an Economic Development policy issue.

- Vocational training orientation should begin at home. Parents and school systems do not emphasize and encourage students to begin thinking of their vocations at an early enough age. Goals and values need to start at home.

- Parents, students, educators and businesses need to become partners in the training of the future workforce of our country. The future of our country and its economy **depends on this partnership.**

- We need to start the focus of vocational education at the elementary levels.

- Business and industry needs to formulate a strong bond with parents and educators to avoid the need to **retrain** employees once they enter the workforce.

- Vocational Education must be marketed so that parents, students and employers can see the "life-style opportunities."

- Vocational Education must become an integral part of our education system.

(Overhead)

- "The General Employee" characteristics employers are searching for are:
  - *Attitude
  - High Ethical Standards/Integrity
  - *Customer Relations Skills
  - Confident Self-Image/Leadership Abilities
  - Responsible Work Ethic
  - Ability to Work/Coordinate with Others
  - Ability to Prioritize
  - Ability to State Rationale
  - Computer Skills/Keyboarding/Typing
  - Railroad Industry Seeks Employees with Mechanical/Welding Skills as well as Technical Skills
  - Management Skills

(Overhead) Five *Most Important Job Skills*
Five Most Important Job Skills

Michigan*	Rochester*
No Substance Abuse	No Substance Abuse
Honesty, Integrity	Follow Directions

Follow Directions	Read Instructions
Respect Others	Follow Safety Rules
Punctuality, Attendance	Respect Others

Five Least Important Job Skills

Michigan	Rochester
Mathematics	Natural Sciences
Social Sciences	Calculus
Natural Sciences	Computers
Computer Programming	Art
Foreign Languages	Foreign Languages

*Results are based on an independent survey by the Michigan Employability Skills Task Force for the Michigan legislature, and the National Center on Education and the Economy for the Rochester, N.Y City School District Board. The results were contained in an independent systems analysis of U.S. Education by three scientists at the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, N.M.

Shortcomings among today's employment seekers:

- *Unrealistic Career Aspirations and Work Expectations-* Organizations are insisting on new levels of accountability in their employees. Make sure you contribute more than you cost. Add value so that everyone can see something important would be missing if you left.
- *Employees who feel their employer "Owes Them Something"-* Part of the problem lies in the "entitlement" mind-set.

People believe that the organization "owes" them continual employment. The era of entitlement is ending. . . .

Instead of relying on their "rights," employees will need to take personal responsibility for their careers.

- *Lack of career related work experience-*

  Employers want more than your body, more than just your arms, back and brain. Your employer wants you to act like an owner. Become a problem solver and you'll become a valuable employee. Organizations need people who can solve problems. Continuous improvement. The Japanese call it (Ky'zen). It is the endless quest for a better way. Every single employee should assume personal responsibility for upgrading his or her job skills and performance.

- *Lack of Reading/Comprehension Skills-*

  Organizations can't go fast if their employees go slow. Organizations with employees that are competitive, lean, agile, and quick to respond clearly have the edge.

- *Lack of written communication skills-*

  Being able to express yourself in an impatient fast changing world with clarity will be a "critical skill." Your job security depends on how valuable you are to your customers and how well you communicate with them. The better you serve them, the better you protect your career.

  In the final analysis, customers are your only source of job security.

- *Absence of Tenacity, Motivation and Commitment-*

  Expect your employer to expect more from you. The reason? The marketplace is expecting far more these days from organizations.

  In today's world, career success belongs to the committed. To those who work from the heart . . . who invest themselves passionately in their job . . . and who adapt quickly when changes reshape their work.

  Bottom Line: Commitment is a gift you should give yourself.

(Overhead) *"The Youth of today are our economic resource of tomorrow. They will be guiding our nation into the future, but first we must guide them."*

(Overhead) *" Already an estimated two-thirds of United States employees work in the service sector, and "Knowledge" is becoming our most important "Product."*

(Overhead) *" This calls for different organizations, as well as different kinds of workers." - Peter F. Drucker*

Conclusion

Career Planning

Through career planning students are now looking into the world of work and trying to plan ahead for the skills they will need.

Five New Work Roles For The Information Age

The trajectory of change over the past several thousand years tells us what's in store as we move forward in the 21st century: Faster change . . . more pressure points. That's a No Brainer.

The question is "Can we adjust? Will we do it quickly enough?" And most important, what will it take to succeed during this world-wide upheaval?

First of all, we have to make it easier for all of us to change.

- We should take personal responsibility for embracing new technology.
- We need to pay attention to what's going on in the world, making sure we see the big picture.

- The future will be bombarding us with new challenges. <u>This is reality</u>. ADAPT!

**** The second secret to success in this new era is to speed up everything we touch***

- Let's focus our needs on how we can help the organization satisfy the world's appetite for <u>fast</u>. We're worth more as employees when we put more <u>kick</u> into the organization.

- So keep asking yourself what You can do to increase the operating velocity. Day in, and day out, think of yourself as an accelerator.

The third step to success comes in thinking toward "new and improved."

- In a world of choice-crazy consumers, our role is to keep coming up with better-than-ever stuff. The idea here is to assign yourself responsibility for being an innovator.

The fourth new emphasis in our thinking should be centered on building our knowledge base.

- If knowledge is to be the new source of wealth in the Information Age, we should be investing in our future. Each of us needs to make space in our daily schedules to be "in school." Burn this into your brain:
  YOU MUST BECOME A CONTINUAL LEARNER.

The fifth new role is to make sure our organization stays "in shape" for the 21st century.

And that shape will keep changing. It probably doesn't matter what business we're in, or where we work, it will keep shifting, resizing and taking on temporary structures to suit the situation at hand.

Our job is to help move the walls.
Everyone of us needs to be a transformer.

So there you have it, the five new roles we need to keep in mind regardless of where we work. Today's challenge is to help our organizations adapt . . .accelerate . . .innovate . . . learn . . . and transform themselves to fit the world's constantly changing conditions.

It's in our best interest to make this sort of mind-shift to accept this new set of responsibilities. We end up better off because it aligns our work behavior with people's consumer behavior.
When you think about it, people like you and me are personally in charge of progress at this point in history. We're the ones causing today's revolution in how work gets done.

We're the human beings who happen to be riding Mother Earth as she spins us into the 21st century. So let's face up to the changes we're causing. And let's enjoy the ride . . .

Conclusion

(Overhead) *It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." - Charles Darwin*

Biography

Sharon Hagemo is the Director of Human Resources for Montana Rail Link, Inc. She has extensive experience in human resource management, training and employee and organizational development.

Since graduating from Montana State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology, Sharon has had an interesting and challenging career including several years as an employment interviewer with Job Service, purchasing and management experience in the mining industry and experience as a medical office manager. For the past 10 years, railroad transportation has been Sharon's focus.

A strong commitment to family and having their support has allowed Sharon to develop a successful career path. Five children and two stepchildren made it a necessity to develop strong organizational skills.

Sharon has been an active member of the American Society for Training and Development, American Council of Railroad Women and Society for Human Resource Management. She has served on the Missoula Aging Services Board of Directors as President and Vice President and on the United Way Board of Directors. She has volunteered to serve on the Office Technical Advisory Committee for Missoula Vocational Technical Center and a task force appointed by the State Superintendent's Office of Public Instruction.

When scheduling permits, Sharon volunteers to speak to student groups throughout the State of Montana discussing employment opportunities and assisting with interview skills to help student secure employment opportunities.

Sharon shares her company's philosophy that *"People are our most important asset."*